

Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, (1992), v.15, n.4, pp.67-88.

ISSN: 0163-9374 (print), 1544-4554 (online)

DOI: 10.1300/J104v15n04_05

<http://www.tandfonline.com/>

http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1300/J104v15n04_05

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Cataloging Alternatives: An Investigation of Contract Cataloging, Cooperative Cataloging, and the Use of Temporary Help

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ABSTRACT. This paper is based on a report issued by an Ohio State University Ad Hoc Task Force which was formed to investigate alternative methods for obtaining bibliographic records from sources outside the Cataloging Department of the Ohio State University Libraries. In this paper, three alternatives are discussed: commercial vendors; cooperative cataloging; and the use of temporary help. The conclusion that was reached by the Task Force was that the use of cooperative cataloging is the best alternative for the Ohio State University Libraries from both practical and economical points of view.

In the summer of 1991, the Technical Services Division of the Ohio State University Libraries formed an ad hoc task force to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of having certain materials cataloged outside the regular workflow of the Cataloging Department. It was the charge of the task force to study several different alternatives to in-house cataloging, including contract cataloging, cooperative cataloging, and temporary help. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the findings of the task force investigation.

The paper will begin by describing the committee's information-gathering techniques, followed by descriptions of each of the three above-mentioned options. It concludes with practical considerations to be taken into account before and after a final decision is made. The information included here is very basic and can be applied to many situations according to each library's specific needs.

INFORMATION GATHERING

To begin the investigation, the task force did online literature searches on the topics of contract cataloging, cooperative cataloging, and temporary help. The search on the use of commercial vendors for cataloging revealed that very little has been written on this subject. In fact, most of what was found related to vendor automation of technical services operations. However, one general article, "The Year's Work in Descriptive Cataloging and . . ." by Janet Swan Hill, included a paragraph which referred to Texas A & M's experience with contract cataloging as described in a paper by Kellough and Thompson.¹ Hill stated that:

. . . although the cataloging was not as inexpensive as projected, it was still less expensive than cataloging in-house. The conclusion that the advantages of the approach out-weighed the disadvantages may provoke catalog managers to consider

the use of outside contractors for cataloging, especially for one time projects for which regular staff can not be budgeted.²

Most of what has been published in the area of cooperative cataloging concerns the compiling of bibliographic records and sharing their use through networks such as OCLC, RLIN, and other bibliographic utilities. Many articles were found which discussed the sharing of cataloging information, the problems encountered with the quality of shared cataloging records, and the time involved in waiting for other people to catalog certain materials. However, no articles were found about the subject of cooperative cataloging arrangements between two libraries. This type of cooperative cataloging addresses the need of cataloging departments to find solutions to certain problems, such as the lack of language, subject, or special format expertise.

A survey of the literature concerning temporary help found several articles that discussed the use of temporary help in academic libraries. Although most of these articles were not directly related to cataloging, they were very helpful in determining how this subject could be approached in this paper. One of the most important articles was "Temporary Employees in Academic and Research Libraries" by James S. Chervinko. Mr. Chervinko mentioned that "hiring temporary workers is one way to alleviate staff shortages."³ He also explored the extent of their use, their wages and benefits, and their advantages and disadvantages.

In another article, "Job Sharing Provides a Useful Alternative," Sheila Plant stated that part-time workers are more productive than full-time workers and that they have more energy and enthusiasm.⁴ No mention could be found in the literature as to the availability of any listings of temporary worker agencies, nor of the capabilities of graduate student assistants.

Another source of temporary help can be found in job exchange arrangements. The concept of international job exchanges between libraries is not new. This subject was discussed in an article by Chris Fardan entitled "Negotiating New Horizons; the Job Exchange Alternative." Mr. Fardan examined the motivation for investigating this option and mapped out the mechanics for making a job exchange happen. He discussed how to get started, how to approach the employer, how to find a partner, setting the scene, and money matters.⁵

Another resource used to gather information on cataloging alternatives was the AUTOCAT (Library Cataloging and Authorities Discussion Group) bulletin board. An inquiry was posted asking about the experiences of other institutions that had made use of commercial vendors for cataloging. AUTOCAT was a more effective source of practical information than the published literature. Respondents were generous in sharing their experiences. The following examples illustrate a few of the responses we received.

- A library was interested in having their materials cataloged in Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. They had investigated the option of contract cataloging, but the information that they received did not apply to these special languages.
- A library has been using contract cataloging for ten years. The contractors work on-site and are provided with office space, etc. They not only do original and copy cataloging, but also book processing, kardex check-in and serials claiming, adding continuations and deleting withdrawals from the collection, and data base maintenance.
- A library has been a provider of consultants for an agri-business library for five years as part of a program that provides library expertise to area businesses and individuals on a cost-recovery basis. Cataloging is done on the cataloger's own

time, after hours. Services involve the establishment of LC classification numbers, LC subject headings, or full cataloging as needed.

- A library had used WLN's contract cataloging service from 1986-1988 for monographs and scores. WLN took care of authority control and even assigned call numbers. The quality of cataloging was excellent. The library stopped using the service when their backlog was brought under control.
- A university librarian told of his experiences with two types of cataloging alternatives. One involved doing contract cataloging of Spanish language materials for a public library. The other was the use of temporary help in which he recruited graduate students from the local library school.

Several librarians asked that we share our findings with them. Others expressed an interest in entering into a cooperative agreement with us to cooperatively catalog certain special collections. For example, one library offered to catalog our English language AV, AMC, curriculum, and ephemeral materials in return for OSU doing their CJK titles.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE THREE OPTIONS

The first option to be discussed is the use of commercial vendors. Compiling a list of vendors to contact was the initial problem to solve. A directory of companies who do contract cataloging does not appear to be available, but would certainly be very helpful to those who need this kind of information. With the help of reference librarians and contacts in other institutions, the task force gathered the names of approximately ten vendors, and from these selected five to interview. A list of questions (see Figure 1) to ask each vendor was compiled in order to be sure to learn as much about services offered as possible. (See Chart 1 for vendor responses.)

Several difficulties were encountered in obtaining information from the vendors. Since every library has different needs and wants, it is very difficult to provide accurate answers to certain questions without seeing the materials to be cataloged. Hence, some vendors requested that samples of items be sent to them so they could determine the price of their services. Others wanted to have specific information about the particular problems that the library wanted to solve before answering any questions.

It became apparent that in selecting a vendor, there are many aspects to the vendor-library relationship which must be considered. The library must clearly define exactly what it wants done and communicate this to the vendor so that there is no misunderstanding about which services are being contracted for. Vendors want to supply the services that libraries request, but do not always have the appropriate on-site expertise, equipment, or resources. For instance, if a library wants to contract with a vendor to provide cataloging of foreign language materials, the library must ascertain if the agency has what is needed to do the job. Does the vendor have on-staff or immediate access to a cataloger with the appropriate language expertise? Does the vendor have access to reference materials for authority work? Does the vendor have access to specialized cataloging tools, such as OCLC, RUN, or a CJK terminal, necessary for a particular language? It is important to determine if the vendor has these resources and understands the expectations of the library, or else the task at hand may not be accomplished to the satisfaction of the library or the vendor.

Figure 1: List of Questions for Vendor Interview

Date:

Name of Vendor:

Contact person:

Telephone:

1. What kinds of services do you offer, i.e. original vs. copy-cataloging, languages, formats?
2. What level of cataloging do you provide?
3. We will have specific needs or standards in terms of our level of cataloging. How will you meet these needs?
4. Do you require the actual physical items to be sent to you, or may we send a surrogate, i.e. photocopy of the title page, etc.?
5. If you require the physical items to be sent, what carrier should be used for shipment? Who is responsible for insuring the items? Who takes responsibility for loss or damage?
6. What types of materials do you prefer not to handle, e.g. bound with, serials, etc.? Would you subcontract for such materials or would you handle them in-house?
7. We would like to gather as much information as possible. Is there someone else we should also speak with or contact?
8. We are considering contracting services to catalog two collections: modern Greek and modern Korean. Are there any differences in how you would handle these collections, i.e. Greek vs. Korean?
9. Do you have in-house catalogers who can handle these languages or would you need to subcontract for these languages?
10. For which access points do you do authority control, e.g. author, subject, series?
11. Have you provided cataloging services for any libraries/agencies in Ohio. If so, may we contact them?

CHART 1

	<i>Type of materials</i>	<i>Cataloging standards</i>	<i>Languages</i>	<i>Security; transportation; postage</i>	<i>Actual item vs. surrogate</i>	<i>Bibliographical Access</i>	<i>Audio Records</i>
A	Books; Serials; AV; Manuscripts; Sound recordings; Scores; Computer files	AACR2; LC practice; Authority control; Names converted to AACR2; Full I-level unless the library wants K-level; Sport checking	Variety of Roman and non-Roman languages	Contract library pay shipping charge of the books to and from OCLC	T.P.; Actual item	OCLC/CIK	OCLC-MARC tape integrated with any records cat. on OCLC by the contracting library
B	Books; Serials; AV; Manuscripts; Sound recordings; Scores; Computer files Maps; Theses; Dissertations	National standards; I-level Authority control subcontracted to Blackwell North America	Western languages; Hebrew	Send backlog certified, library pay the expenses	T.P.; Order record; Others	OCLC	OCLC worksheets; Cards
C	Books; Non-books	AACR2; LCSH; Dewey Class; LCC	Chinese; Japanese; Korean; Russian; Hebrew; Vietnamese;	Use UPS and contract library pay the cost	T.P.; Colophon; actual piece; AV tapes	OCLC; Planning to use OCLC/CJK and RUN?CJK	Marc worksheets; MARC tape; Catalog cards
D	Books; Non-books; Don't like to deal with serials and AV	I-level; MARC formats; LC practice; AACR2; SuDoc; ANSCR; LC classification; LSCH LC names and subject authority	English; Spanish; Chinese; Arabic; Hebrew; Greek	Send backage certified by UPS with an inventory list	Prefer actual item	OCLC	
E	Books; Serials; Audio cassette; Video cassette	I-level; MARC formats; LC practice; AACR2; LC classification; Dewey; ANSCR class for sound recordings	Korean	Send backlog lib pay the shipping	T.p.; verso L.p.; colophon; table of contents; last page no.; ill. Sometimes they need the actual item	OCLC/CJK	MARC worksheets; MARC tape; Catalog cards

An important aspect of establishing the vendor-library relationship is determining the price structure for the desired services. Most vendors want very specific information in order to determine a fair pricing structure and may ask for a representative sample of the collection to be sent to them before a firm quote can be made. Some vendors will catalog this sample without charge; others will charge. Some will ask only for a surrogate, i.e., a photocopy of the title page; others may suggest that the entire item be sent, especially for foreign language materials, if there is concern that the materials may be difficult to catalog from a surrogate. Some vendors will charge for writing the specifications of the contract; others will not. The pricing structure may include differentials for copy cataloging versus original cataloging, producing cards versus providing the records on tape.

For our study, we sent a sample of title pages (ten in Korean and ten in Greek) to different vendors. After cataloging, they were returned to us along with the cataloging copy and price estimates. The prices varied significantly from one vendor to another. The reason for these variations is that each vendor has its own pricing structure. Some vendors charge per title, others charge per hour. Another factor which affects the pricing is the way in which the records are produced. For example, some vendors do not have access to bibliographic utilities such as OCLC. produce the record online. Other vendors require the library's OCLC authorization number so that they can enter the records directly into the system. If the library prefers, the records can be placed in their save file for review. After any adjustments are made to cutter numbers, etc., the record can be produced online by the library. If the library subscribes to OCLC MARCTAPE, the cataloging done by the vendor can be merged into the tape which contains records produced by the library

The following Tables (Tables 1-3) provide examples of several types of pricing structures provided to us by vendors for the cataloging of a special language collection.

Among all the vendors, prices sometimes varied from one language to another. For example, for cataloging Greek materials one vendor's pricing structure was as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 1

Vendor A	
Service	Price
Searching, matching (no editing) and producing a set of CJK cards (including main entry, shelflist, and one card for each subject heading and added entry). Unmatched titles are returned to library with no charge.	\$7.00 per card set
Producing a set of CJK cards using a record identified by the contracting library	\$4.00 per card set
Adding CJK characters and producing a set of cards	\$10.00 per card set
Copy and original cataloging	\$25.00 per title
Original cataloging only	\$40.00 per title
Inputting of the contracting library's original cataloging	\$12.00 per title

TABLE 2

Vender B	
Service	Price
Transliterations of bibliographic information (i.e. title, author, publisher, edition, etc.)	\$11.75 per title
Original cataloging – preparation of MARC worksheets for the contracting library to input into OCLC	
Books	\$20.00 per record
Non-book materials	\$28.00 per record
Original cataloging including catalog card and/or MARC tape production	
Romanized	\$25.00 per set
Vernacular	\$30.00 per set
Copy cataloging for books	
Search, input or download onto diskette or hard copy	\$10.00 per title
Search, modify, input, and download	\$15.00 per title
Produce catalog cards (Romanized)	\$12.00 per title
Produce catalog cards (Vernacular)	\$16.00 per title
Copy cataloging for non-book materials	\$17.50 per title

TABLE 3

Vendor C	
Service	Price
Original cataloging	
Books	\$5.00 per hour
Microforms	\$2.00 per hour
Serials	\$2.00 per hour
Music scores	\$2.00 per hour
Copy cataloging	
Books	\$3.00 per hour
Microforms	\$1.00 per 45 minutes
Serials	\$1.00 per 45 minutes
Music scores	\$1.00 per hour

TABLE 4

Vendor D	
Service	Price
Copy cataloging	
Books	\$20.00 per title
Call number	\$2.00 per record
Original cataloging	
Books	\$34.00 per title
Problem/Incomplete searching/Flagging charge	\$1.50
Physical processing	
Write call number on verso of title page	No charge
Labels	\$.65 per label set + \$.35 per volume to place labels in/on item
Set up fee	\$250.00

Although most vendors listed specific prices for specific tasks, some gave only what they called a "flat price": \$12.00 per title for searching, editing, and providing worksheets for original cataloging. In this case the contracting library would input the information on the worksheets into whatever bibliographic utility is used and either produce catalog cards or provide for the records to be integrated into the local library system.

From these examples, we can conclude that pricing is a very complex process. The vendors that charged by the hour were very vague about how many titles can be done in an hour, and understandably so because so much depends on how difficult the items are to catalog. It could be a very economical choice, however, if the majority of titles are fiction or literature or other types of materials which do not require detailed cataloging. It is highly recommended that the library make a careful study of the nature of its collection so that it can make a knowledgeable analysis of the pricing structure of various vendors before making their selection.

The next option to be discussed is cooperative cataloging. One of the most successful examples of cooperation between libraries is the arrangement between the University of Minnesota and the University of Washington. The University of Minnesota does Scandinavian languages and the University of Washington does the Arabic language.

This arrangement was the result of an ALA Big Heads meeting in which the topic of shared cataloging was discussed. The University of Minnesota had lost their Arabic cataloger and had a backlog of Arabic materials that was growing. They wanted to solve this problem, but did not have the internal resources to catalog these books. The University of Washington responded because they had a backlog of Scandinavian books and had no in-house expertise to deal with it.

The project is based on the exchange of approximately 25 titles per month, with the actual pieces being sent. Once a month, each library prepares a shipment, complete with a packing list of the titles sent, and uses US mail book rate for shipping. Each library pays for the shipment it sends out, that is, it pays for sending out its own materials and also pays to return the other library's materials. This way the price is equally shared. In addition, an Email message is sent each time a shipment goes out so that the receiving library knows to look for the shipment. So far no shipment has been lost. When a shipment is unpacked a streamer is put in each book so that it does not get mixed in with the library's regular workflow. The University of Washington, in addition, stamps its books so that they can be easily identified.

Records are handled differently by each library because of differences in online systems. Each library searches its own books (in OCLC and RLIN) before sending them to be cataloged. The University of Washington also searches (through Internet) the University of Minnesota's online catalog, Lumina, to make sure that nothing has been missed. Only original cataloging is considered for this project. At the University of Minnesota, the Middle Eastern Studies Librarian does the selection of the materials to be sent. The University of Minnesota catalogs Washington's materials in the training file of its local Notis-based system and sends them a printout. The University of Washington then enters the records into OCLC. The University of Washington catalogs Minnesota's books directly into OCLC using the University of Minnesota's logon number. Therefore, each library gets its holdings symbol on its own materials.

Each library does full I-level cataloging. They trust that each institution's catalogers will be competent. As for authority work, each library follows the other's procedures. While the procedures are similar, there are some differences because the University of Minnesota has an online authority system and the University of Washington does not. Each institution spot-checks as needed. They also advise each other as to ranges of classification numbers and appropriate

cutter numbers to be used.

No processing beyond cataloging is done by either library. The relationship will last as long as each library has materials that the other can handle. As it turns out, the University of Washington is clearing out its backlog sooner than the University of Minnesota. They may continue the relationship, however, if the University of Washington finds other appropriate items for Minnesota to work on.

The University of Minnesota feels that this project has worked very well. The arrangement has been economical. One of the important pieces of advice that the University of Minnesota gave to us is to find an interested group of technical services people and discuss the possibility of exchanging materials that need to be cataloged. The University of Minnesota is very enthusiastic about the benefits of cooperative cataloging.

The final option to be discussed is the use of temporary help. In the investigation of this area, we found that a library can get temporary help from inside and outside the United States. The temporary helper could be experienced in languages, subject matter, or special formats. Temporary help can be found from several sources.

Graduate student assistants are often sought because of special language or subject expertise. In particular, foreign language cataloging requires someone who not only knows the language, but is also knowledgeable about the history and culture of the country. The ideal solution would be to find a graduate student in a library school who has the requisite language and cultural background. However, such students are not always available, particularly to libraries which are not located near a library school. In this case, job notices posted in the appropriate language department or contacts made to foreign student organizations can yield qualified student assistants.

If a library is seeking professional temporary workers, the International Internship Program (IIP) in Tokyo provides librarians to work in the United States and other countries for a period of one to nine months as a paid member of the company staff. The IIP was created to bring the Far East and its expertise into the United States. Its goals are to promote a better mutual understanding between countries, to increase the exchange of professional ideas and techniques, and to assist present and future Japanese professionals to become better at what they do as well as to become more internationally minded.

Visiting librarians are another source of temporary help. The CIC (Committee on Institutional Cooperation) Visiting Librarian Program endeavors to provide a broad and flexible mechanism through which librarians of CIC member institutions may spend time in other CIC libraries for a variety of professional purposes. Head-quartered in Chicago, the CIC has a membership of thirteen mid-western institutions including the University of Chicago, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and also Chicago, Indiana University, the University of Iowa, the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the University of Minnesota, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, Purdue, the University of Wisconsin at Madison, and Pennsylvania State University.

Some professional catalogers are willing to work in a second job, thereby providing another source of temporary help. Several people we interviewed mentioned that they had arranged for such "moonlighting" professionals to help clear up backlogs or to provide needed expertise for certain collections. Distance is not necessarily a barrier to a workable relationship, providing that procedures can be agreed upon as to the shipment of materials or surrogates, the quality and level of cataloging, and the adherence to necessary local procedures. The financial arrangements usually included in an agreement are to pay expenses (or arrange for a sharing of logon numbers) and to pay either per item cataloged or per hour. We found that the price for these

arrangements was very reasonable and less than the price of hiring a full-time staff member.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When a library is faced with the task of seeking an alternative method of cataloging, it is important that there is a clear understanding of what is to be accomplished by having the cataloging done outside the library. Is it to get rid of a backlog as soon as possible? Is it to compensate for a lack of in-house expertise? Or is it a way of dealing with a financial exigency? The answers to these questions can have a great effect on assuring that the most suitable alternative is selected. Other decisions which must be made include:

1. Who will be the person within the library responsible for the arrangement, including solving problems, overseeing the workflow internally, and communicating with the outside personnel?
2. What kind of cataloging will be done, i.e., original, copy cataloging, or both?
3. What formats will be considered, e.g., books only, serials, audiovisual materials, etc.?
4. What languages will be done?
5. What are the priorities of additional services to be considered, e.g., searching the database for copy, labeling, assigning cutter numbers and shelving, etc.?
6. What will be used for cataloging the item, i.e., the entire physical item to be sent or a surrogate such as a photocopy of the title page?

Once the library has a clear understanding of what needs to be done, the next step is to select the option that best meets its needs. If the commercial vendor option is chosen there are certain criteria which must be considered in the process of selecting a vendor. They are:

1. The vendor has to have the appropriate professional staff to do the assigned work for the library.
2. It is preferable that the vendor have access to one or more bibliographic utilities, such as OCLC, RLIN, etc.
3. It is advisable to get proposals from several vendors and to evaluate these proposals in terms of getting the best quality and price.
4. It is helpful to ask for opinions from other institutions that have dealt with the vendor being considered.

After the vendor has been selected, the library must then appoint a project manager to be responsible for the entire process and to work as a liaison between the library and the vendor. The project manager, with the assistance of the head of cataloging, must make decisions on the following cataloging issues.

1. Will the library do database searching before sending the materials to the vendor? If the decision is to do in-house searching, a decision has to be made whether to send original cataloging, copy to be edited, copy without call numbers and subject headings, or all of the above.
2. What level of cataloging will be done: full level, one subject heading or two; what kind of authority control for all access points; LC classification; LC practices; AACR2;

transliteration vs. vernacular.

3. Should the bibliographic records be created on tape, disc, or worksheet? In the case of inputting records directly into OCLC by the vendor, the library needs to give the vendor an OCLC authorization number.
4. How many items will be sent to the vendor and how often, e.g., every month, week, etc.?
5. The collection should be examined to identify items that are in need of repair or binding and prioritized in terms of which items should be cataloged first.

After these decisions have been made, the vendor can be contacted and the contract written according to the needed requirements. In writing the contract, the project manager must be sure that both sides understand all of the requirements and that all of the specifications are clear.

What if a library decides that the second option, cooperative cataloging, is the best one for meeting their needs? This option can be arranged in several ways. One way is to post a notice on an electronic mail bulletin board announcing a library's interest in cooperative cataloging. Another way is to make an announcement at professional meetings or to contact directly libraries known to have strong collections in the area of expertise needed.

There are several qualities to look for in a cooperative cataloging partner. Both libraries should agree as to cataloging practices and standards. Although easier if both use the same bibliographic utility, it is not impossible to do across databases. If authorization numbers can be exchanged it is then possible for each library to input records directly into the database. When using authorization numbers, the libraries do not necessarily have to produce the records. Rather they can catalog into a save file and then inform their partner of the save number. If OCLC is used the libraries could exchange microenhancer disks with each shipment of materials.

If, however, a library decides that sending materials or surrogates out of the library for cataloging is not to their liking, the third option of hiring temporary help can be chosen. The most common type of temporary help is the student assistant. Student assistants can be particularly helpful in cataloging foreign language materials. They should be trained by and work closely with an experienced editor or original cataloger. They can search the database to find cataloging copy for the items needing cataloging. If copy is found, the student can verify the information in the record and then give it to the editor or cataloger. If no copy can be found, the student can interpret the title page, identifying the following information: main entry of the book, title, series, place of publication, publisher, date, pagination, and any other information present. They can also identify the main subjects of the item. The cataloger can then translate this information into a cataloging record.

If a library prefers to hire a professional librarian in a temporary position rather than a student assistant, they should investigate a program such as the CIC Visiting Librarian Program. Visiting librarian arrangements may be initiated in several ways. Typically, arrangements begin with a conversation between librarians at two different libraries, or between a librarian and a library director. After all the parties involved have agreed to the terms of a visit or exchange, a letter describing the proposed arrangement, signed by both library directors, is sent to the director of CIC, who will determine whether it is within the spirit of the program. If so, he will then officially designate each librarian a CIC Visiting Librarian for the proposed period.

The visiting librarian's responsibilities will be to catalog those materials designated by the host library. A cataloger at the host library should be assigned to work closely with the visiting librarian and to be ready to answer his/her questions. The visiting librarian should be given an

orientation to the work flow and to any local procedures, but should not require any training from the host library in applying national standards of cataloging. It is advisable to review the work of the visiting librarian during training and then periodically spot-check the work in order to ensure that local practices have been applied.

CONCLUSION

After studying these three alternatives for obtaining cataloging records from sources outside the cataloging department, the committee came to the conclusion that for OSU the option of entering into a cooperative arrangement with another library seemed to be the most economical and successful choice. To begin with, setting up a cooperative cataloging arrangement does not seem to require as many details and specifications as are required to set up a contract with a vendor. However, it must be kept in mind that there are several hidden costs to be considered. The process is not as easy as merely sending the materials out and then receiving in return the cataloged item. Other time-consuming processes need to be done in-house, e.g., prioritizing and preparing of the materials; keeping track not only of the comings and goings of your own library's materials, but also of your cooperative cataloging partner's materials; shelflisting and producing the records; processing the books; not to mention the cataloging of your partner's materials.

But the main positive feature of cooperative cataloging is that your materials will be cataloged by a librarian in an institution similar to your own, who has the needed language/subject/form expertise as well as a knowledge of the needs of patrons like yours. With a cooperative cataloging arrangement you not only get the job done, but you also create a deep relationship with another library based on mutual trust of each other's work.

We feel that the use of commercial vendors should be the last option to be considered. Just finding a vendor that can accomplish a library's particular needs is not an easy task. Also, commercial cataloging is expensive and there is no guarantee that the quality of cataloging will measure up to the library's standards. This is especially true for an academic library which serves a more specialized clientele. In-house professional catalogers have the opportunity to become familiar with the needs of the library's patrons either on a personal level by serving on an information desk or by consulting with reference librarians who have day to day contacts with library users. This experience is then reflected in their cataloging. Vendor cataloging, however, is totally removed from the end user. The library can try to overcome this problem by giving the vendor a detailed description of what is needed, but the problem can never be completely solved because the vendor deals with the abstract, not with a user approach to cataloging.

Vendors, however, could be a very appropriate choice for a library that needs to catalog a small collection which does not require difficult cataloging, i.e., detailed subject analysis or complicated descriptive work. They could also be good for libraries with a small staff, because use of a vendor probably would be less expensive than hiring additional staff. However, as mentioned above, there is also in-house work to be done: formulating contract specifications; prioritizing and preparing the materials to be sent; keeping track of the shipments; making necessary corrections; merging the cataloging into the library's system, etc.

In terms of cost, the hiring of temporary help falls between cooperative and commercial cataloging. It is fairly easy to locate graduate student assistants and is very practical to hire them on a temporary basis. Another option, the use of a "moonlighting" professional cataloger, is also less expensive than the use of a vendor. One advantage of hiring a "moonlighter" is that the job can be done with a minimum of training and the quality of cataloging will probably be greater than that

from a vendor. Since the work more than likely will be done in the library, no shipment of materials is necessary and communication between the temporary cataloger and the in-house staff is simplified.

In these days of economic problems, most libraries are feeling the pinch. If it becomes necessary to seek an alternative approach to in-house cataloging, it is important that a careful study be made of all the options available so that the final choice will offer the best solution to the library's particular needs.

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